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A Brief Statement

of the

Object and Plan

of the

Hudson-Fulton Celebration

Commission, New York

in

1909



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The Hudson-Fulton Celebration Commission

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A BRIEF STATEMENT
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Hudson-Fulton Celebration in 1909

The Hudson-Fulton Celebration Commission consists of 365 members appointed by the Governor of the State of New York and the Mayor of the City of New York and incorporated by chapter 325 of the Laws of 1906 of the State of New York. Its membership includes the mayors of all the 46 cities of the State and the presidents of 38 incorporated villages along the Hudson river. Its affairs are conducted by a board of trustees consisting of the mayors of the 46 cities and 100 other members; and by about 45 committees embracing the entire membership of the Commission.

The purpose of the Commission is to arrange for the celebration in 1909 of the three hundredth anniversary of the discovery of the Hudson river by Henry Hudson in 1609, and the one hundredth anniversary of the successful application of steam to the navigation of the river by Robert Fulton in 1807. The postponement of the celebration of the centenary of steam navigation from 1907 to 1909 in order that it might be combined with the celebration of the tercentenary of Hudson's voyage was deemed advisable for the reason that the two historic events occurred on the same river and their anniversaries come so close together as to make separate commemorations upon any large scale inexpedient.

Although both of the events to be commemorated are associated with the Hudson river, their significance is State-wide and it is designed to give them a celebration of State-wide interest. About two-thirds of the population of the

State resides upon or is directly tributary to this great water course, and the remainder of the State is intimately concerned, for it is the existence of this river in connection with the remarkable geographical situation and topographical nature of the State that has made its wonderful growth and prosperity possible. The physical facts which give New York its pre-eminence as the Empire State have existed from prehistoric times. Before the advent of the European, the red man was able to proceed by water, with only a short portage at Rome, from New York harbor by way of the Hudson and Mohawk rivers, Wood creek, Oneida lake and the Oswego river to Lake Ontario, and thence through the chain of Great Lakes to the farthest region of Lake Superior. These extraordinary natural facilities for reaching the most distant parts constituted one of the chief factors of the strength of the League of the Iroquois, the most remarkable and powerful aboriginal confederacy north of Mexico. The same geological forces which constructed these waterways produced also the almost level path by which the moccasined feet of the red man threaded the primeval forests from the Mohawk to Lake Erie and along which his white successor built the Erie canal connecting the ocean with the great fresh-water seas of the interior.

The exploration of the Hudson river by the famous English navigator under the auspices of the Dutch East India Company announced the advent of European civilization to this region, and sounded the signal for the transfer of the pre-eminence which the Iroquois had enjoyed to their white successors in the same territory. And when, in the fullness of time, Fulton demonstrated upon the same waters the practicability of steam navigation, he not only vastly increased the natural internal facilities which the State enjoyed, but he also linked the State as never before to the nations of the old world.

The two events to be commemorated are therefore of primary significance in the history of New York State and city, for one opened up to the world the great harbor and river which are the natural physical factors of our greatness, and the other gave birth to the vast steam-propelled

commerce which has so largely contributed to make New York the Empire State and New York city the Metropolis of the New World.

The plans for the celebration, briefly outlined in the following pages, have been formulated with a view to the international, national, interstate, State and local significance of the events to be commemorated.

The people of Holland, under royal auspices, are building a reproduction of the "Half Moon," to be presented to the Commission manned with a crew in the costumes of the period of Henry Hudson. The reception of this distinguished delegation, together, as it is hoped, with ships and official representatives of foreign nations, will mark the *international* phase of the celebration.

The *national* government will be represented by the Federal troops, the United States navy, and distinguished civil officers.

An *interstate* participation cannot be avoided when two commonwealths, like New York and New Jersey, have so much in common in their geographical, historical, social and commercial relations; and the appointment by Gov. Hughes of fifteen distinguished citizens of New Jersey upon the Commission, as well as the inquiries from New Jersey boards of trade and other sources indicate that such participation is in contemplation.

The *State-wide* observance of the events has been provided for in the preparations for commemorative exercises in all the universities, colleges, schools and learned societies, throughout the State.

In the Hudson River Valley, every county seat from Newburgh northward is preparing actively for one day of local celebration.

In New York city the features of the celebration already in contemplation promise to make it unique in character and of lasting educational value.

Since the era of centennial commemorations in America began in 1876, their value has been demonstrated beyond question, and private generosity has vied with Federal, State and municipal appropriations in carrying them out.

During the past thirty-two years, New York State and city have participated in celebrations held in other places and commemorating events particularly affecting those localities. Now, in the course of events, New York State and city have arrived at their own red letter year, and suitable plans, as hereafter set forth, have been prepared for its celebration.

In heartily inviting the citizens and civic organizations generally to co-operate in this celebration, the Commission feels that no city and State in the Union have greater cause to be proud of their history than the city and State of New York; no city and State have been so neglectful of their own history and at the same time so generous in contributing to the magnification of others; and no city and State, with respect to the character of its great proportion of population received from other shores, is so needful and deserving of the civic stimulus to be received from a proper commemoration of their local history. Anything that will augment the pride of our people in their city and State and increase their loyalty to their institutions is deserving of the most hearty and practical encouragement, and the Commission feels that any expenditure which individuals or civic organizations may make to participate in the celebration will be a profitable civic investment which will bear interest for generations to come.

The program of the celebration as at present outlined, but subject to modification in details, is as follows:

RELIGIOUS SERVICE DAYS.

(Saturday, September 25, and Sunday, September 26, 1909.)

The Commission is of the opinion that in arranging for the celebration the people should not overlook the Divine guidance in the two great events to be commemorated, one of which opened up our State to modern civilization and led to the founding of the City of New York, and the other of which laid the foundation for the vast commerce upon which the prosperity of the City and State so largely de-

pend. It has therefore set apart the first two days for religious observances by those who are accustomed to worship on Saturday and Sunday.

RECEPTION DAY.

(Monday, September 27th.)

The secular observances will begin on Monday, September 27th, with the following features:

General decoration of public and private dwellings from New York to the head of the river.

Rendezvous of American and foreign vessels at New York.

Fac-simile of Hudson's "Half Moon" to enter the river, be formally received and take her place in line.

Fac-simile of Fulton's "Clermont" to start from original site with appropriate exercises and take position in line.

Visiting guests to disembark and be officially received.

Opening of exhibits of paintings, prints, books, models, relics, etc., by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the American Museum of Natural History, the Hispanic Museum, the American Numismatic Society, the New York Public Library, the New York Historical Society, the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, the American Geographical Society, Webb's School for Shipbuilders, the New York Yacht Club, and *similar institutions throughout the State*. The exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the American Museum of Natural History promise to be the most remarkable of the kind ever held in this country and will probably extend over a period of several months.

Music festivals in the evening in each of the five boroughs of the city.

HISTORICAL DAY.

(Tuesday, September 28th.)

On Tuesday, September 28th, there will be an Historical Parade in the City of New York. The procession will be

composed of floats and moving tableaux representing the principal events in the history of the City and State.

In the evening, the Official Literary Exercises will be held in the Metropolitan Opera House, the Great Hall of the City College, Carnegie Hall, and the Opera House of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, at which orations will be delivered by men of national reputation.

GENERAL COMMEMORATION DAY.

(Wednesday, September 29th.)

Soon after the Commission was formed, a World's Fair at or near New York City was suggested. After giving several public hearings the subject was referred to the Plan and Scope Committee, who, in their preliminary report, expressed the belief that the country had been surfeited with such temporary celebrations and voiced the hope that the celebration of 1909 would be conducted on a plan which would leave monumental works of lasting benefit to the people. The ideas thus expressed have received unequivocal expressions of approval from the leading newspapers of this and other States and have been accepted as the policy of the Commission.

It is proposed therefore that Wednesday, September 29th, be devoted to the dedication of parks and memorials along the Hudson River, and to General Commemorative Exercises throughout the State. It is recommended not only that between now and then, the most earnest efforts be made to secure great memorials like Inwood Hill Park, but also that the civic pride of various communities along the river be invoked to participate in like manner by establishing parks, institutions or other public memorials. The interest of the numerous historical and patriotic societies is invited in the erection of monuments and tablets, so that the history of the Hudson Valley may be written in stone and bronze from the site of old Fort Amsterdam to the site of old Fort Orange. The Commission has advices which indicate that monuments to William the Silent and

Henry Hudson, a tablet to the Founders and Patriots of New York and a tablet on Fort Tryon will be ready for dedication.

Wednesday is essentially an educational day, designed to be participated in by the universities, colleges, schools, museums and learned and patriotic societies *throughout the whole State*. While the commemoration of 1909 must, from geographical considerations, largely center around the Hudson River, the glory and the material benefits of Hudson's and Fulton's achievements are the heritage of the people of the entire State, and the programme for Wednesday affords a practical means for a general observance of the occasion from one end of the State to the other. Features of this day's observances will be as follows: Commemorative exercises in Columbia University, New York University, College of City of New York, Cooper Union, University of St. John at Fordham, Hebrew University, Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, Public Schools, Historical Societies, and *all the universities, colleges and institutions of learning throughout the State of New York*; with free lectures for the people in New York City under the auspices of the Board of Education.

The programme for this day contemplates also:

Aquatic sports on the Hudson River, designed in the first instance for friendly competition between the crews of the naval vessels, but which may embrace motor boat races and such other amusements as may seem practicable and desirable;

A reception to visiting guests at West Point during the day; and

An Official Banquet in honor of distinguished guests in the City of New York in the evening.

MILITARY PARADE DAY.

(Thursday, September 30th.)

On Thursday will occur the military parade, participated in by the United States Army, the United States

Navy and Marine Corps, the National Guard and the Naval Militia.

Owing to the probable length of this parade, which may contain as many as 25,000 troops, the great fatigue which would be caused to the distinguished reviewing party if required to witness a longer procession, and the difficulties in the way of moving with precision and promptness a larger body if composed of undrilled civilians, it has been deemed advisable to eliminate civic features from this parade.

An evening reception to the official guests at the headquarters of the Department of the East on Governor's Island is suggested as the closing event of the day if it proves agreeable to the authorities.

HUDSON RIVER DAY.

(Friday, October 1st.)

Friday, October 1st is devoted to the Naval Parade and incidental ceremonies. It appears to be practicable for some of our naval vessels to proceed as far north as Newburgh Bay. It is planned to have as many vessels of the navy, merchant marine, excursion boats, and pleasure craft as possible go from New York to Newburgh, taking with them the fac-similes of the "Half Moon" and "Clermont."

In order that the inhabitants of the country on either side of the river may see the parade and the reproductions of the historic vessels, we recommend that the day be devoted by them to fêtes champêtres along the river-sides from New York to Newburgh.

As the procession passes up the river, salutes may be fired from eligible points.

Simultaneously with the advance of the South Hudson Division, it is proposed to have a counter-procession from Albany to Newburgh, the two divisions meeting and holding appropriate ceremonies at Newburgh. Here the "Half Moon" and "Clermont" will join the North Hudson Division.

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CARNIVAL DAY.

(Saturday, October 2d.)

Saturday, October 2d, is designed for a general Carnival Day in New York city.

The New York division of the Naval Parade will return to its starting point.

In all the cities this will be peculiarly the Children's Day, devoted to fetes in public and private parks and playgrounds.

The celebration will culminate in New York City in the *evening* with a Carnival Parade. This feature, with its moving allegorical tableaux participated in by all nationalities represented in the City will, it is believed, exceed in beauty and interest the most famous carnivals of Europe.

Brilliancy will be added to the general spectacle by the illumination of the fleet and public and private buildings and a pyrotechnic display. Displays of fireworks at various points, notably on the great bridges as in the fetes of the 14th of July in Paris, are in contemplation.

At 9 p. m. it is designed to have a chain of signal fires from mountain tops and other eligible points along the whole river, lighted simultaneously. An arrangement has been made with the Pain Manufacturing Company as official illuminators, by which local communities can contract for these fires at reasonable and uniform rates.

UPPER HUDSON WEEK.

(Beginning Sunday, October 3d.)

It is planned to devote the week beginning Sunday, October 3d, to celebrations in the communities along the Upper Hudson. This will be somewhat in the nature of an Old Home Week. The events previously outlined will draw many residents of the State to the City of New York and will prevent as full a participation in local celebrations as

might otherwise be possible; whereas, in the week following not only will the citizens of the communities outside of the Metropolis be at home, but former residents of those communities will also be freer to make pilgrimages to their old homes, renew old ties and participate in local exercises. Beginning Sunday, October 3d, such portion of the Lower Hudson fleet as can continue the voyage to Troy, together with the North Hudson Fleet and the "Half Moon" and "Clermont," will be subject to the arrangements of the Upper Hudson Committee of the Commission.

DUTCHESS COUNTY DAY.

(Monday October 4th.)

On Monday the naval parade will be at Poughkeepsie, the county seat of Dutchess county, and remain there during the Poughkeepsie Ceremonies. The erection of a statue of Robert Fulton has been suggested as a feature of the Poughkeepsie celebration.

ULSTER COUNTY DAY.

(Tuesday, October 5th.)

On Tuesday, the naval parade will proceed to Kingston, the county seat of Ulster county, while similar exercises take place there. A statue of Governor Clinton has been proposed as the permanent memorial here.

GREENE COUNTY DAY.

(Wednesday, October 6th.)

On Wednesday, October 6, the naval parade will go to Catskill, the county seat of Greene county. It is proposed that the ceremonies here include the dedication of a statue of Rip Van Winkle.



COLUMBIA COUNTY DAY.

(Thursday, October 7th.)

On Thursday, October 7th, the fleet will continue on to Hudson, which is the county seat of Columbia county and is named after the great explorer. A statue of Henry Hudson is the appropriate memorial proposed at this point.

ALBANY COUNTY DAY.

(Friday, October 8th.)

On Friday, the 8th, the flotilla will advance to the Capital of the commonwealth, the county seat of Albany county and the oldest city in the State. A statue of Peter Schuyler, the first mayor of Albany, has been suggested as the permanent memorial here.

RENSSELAER COUNTY DAY.

(Saturday, October 9th.)

In like manner the naval parade will advance to Troy, the county seat of Rensselaer county on Saturday, October 9th, and form the nucleus of the celebration there. A statue of Van Rensselaer, who obtained the first land grant in that section, has been suggested as an appropriate monument to be erected here.

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